THE FORBIDDEN ROAD

By MARIA ALBANESI.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

"In any matter of this kind," he said, "I beg you will use me in every way that may seem good to you, Mrs. Lancing. I gather that your friend needs immediate help; pray do not let her be troubled an hour longer than is possible."

He signed a blank check, and slipped it into an envelope.

As he turned and held this out to her, Camilla Lancing gave a little shiver. She looked at him without taking the envelope.

"Oh!" she murmured, "I—what can I say? How good—how good. I came—on—on the impulse of the moment, not because you have so much—but because I felt—I feel you are so glad to—to help any one, but—"

"Why should there be any 'but'," he asked, not very steadily; "by this time I hope you know that I hold it one of my greatest pleasures, as it is certainly an honor, to serve you whenever you will permit me to do so. Will you remember this always"

Camilla bit her lip again, and then put out her hand.

Haverford bent over it, held it a moment in a firm grip. Then, as though yielding to some overwhelming temptation, stooped and kissed it. Her hand was kissed at least once or twice a day on the average, but Rupert Haverford had never before permitted himself this old-fashioned and gracious sign of homage. It was with him an expression of something far, far deeper than mere courtesy to a very delightful and very pretty woman. She divined this instantly, and her heart began to beat nervously. As he released her hand she pulled her sables about her and prepared to go. She was eager now to be away from him. The expression of his face troubled her. She had chafed almost angrily at his silence, his self-repression, yet now that she knew he would speak, she dreaded to hear his words.

A thousand jarring feelings thrilled her. Though there had been many moments recently when he had appealed to her physically, when, indeed, she had frankly admired him, in this moment she felt almost as though she hated him.

It was a sensation which she could not define, which she would have found practically impossible to explain to another person, but it was very real, very oppressive.

She crushed the envelope he had given her in her hand, and hid it in her big muff; then she began speaking gayly.

"What are you doing to-night?" she asked. "You are engaged? Oh, I am so sorry! I thought that perhaps you would have taken Agnes and me to dinner somewhere. We have no engagement; but never mind, we can do that another night."

"Will you dine with me to-morrow?" he asked. He, too, was nervous. He had not her gift of slipping into a seeming indifference. Her easy, everyday manner separated them once again, brought back with a rush the old uncertainty, the old unrest.

She laughed.

"Oh! delightful. And let us dine here, do, please. I simply adore this house, and I want Agnes to see it. You know, you have always happened to be away when she has been up in town. How enchanting everything is! No matter where one looks, one sees something that is perfect of its kind; and that is not what one can say of every magnificent house, you know!" said Camilla. She had moved to the door, and he opened it. They passed out into the wide corridor. "The fact is, a man's taste is always so much better than a woman's," she chattered on restlessly; "it is really a most absurd idea to suppose that a house must have a woman in it. For the best of us will persist in filling our rooms with rubbish. Do you know, to this day I have the greatest difficulty in denying myself the joys of Japanese fans on the walls, and art muslin draperies and curtains? Oh!" she said suddenly, "I quite forgot to ask you; how is your mother? I hope she is better."

"I hope she is," said Rupert, "but I have not seen her. She has gone to Paris. My half-brother is ill."

He went with her to the entrance door, and himself put her into the cab that was waiting.

She stretched out her hand just before starting.

"I must try and say thank you," she said nervously, "but it is not easy to say. I shall send—this—on to my friend at once. You will have the consciousness of knowing you have made one person very happy to-night, Mr. Haverford! A demain! May we dine late—I have such a full day to-morrow. Good-night."

He held her hand very, very closely, and let it go reluctantly.

The light of the cab lamp was shining on him fully. He looked very handsome as he stood there against the dark, foggy background, a man to make gladness to the eyes and heart of any woman. But as she rolled away swiftly, Camilla Lancing leaned back and flung up her veil, sighing rapidly and impatiently.

"After all, he does mean to speak—and soon," she said to herself, "and when he does I must agree; I must say 'Yes'! How can I possibly refuse? It would be madness. He would do everything so well. I need never again be anxious about the children, and I should have everything I want, no more horrible bills, no more difficulties, and an end to the hideous dependence on Ned's father." She puled aside the sable almost roughly from about her throat. Th night was bitterly cold, but she felt as if she were stifling.

"But what a life. I don't believe I should be able to stand it for even a month. I should feel like a caged animal. My very thoughts would not be my own. I wanted him to love me, but not like this. He loves me too much. He will exact too much. I shall have to give up everything I like. No more bridge, no more freedom, no more fun. Oh, my God!" said Camilla with fierceness, though she was crying, "I know I shall never be able to do it! I don't want that sort of man," she said, "I don't want to stagnate and grow old, and good. I want to live—to live! And I did live before Ned left me! How can I marry a man like this after I have been Ned's wife? Oh, Ned, Ned, if only you had not died! If only I could feel you were somewhere in the world, even though there were twenty women between us—it—it would be all so different!

She cried unceasingly for a few moments as the cab swayed and jerked over the greasy pavement, and then she pulled herself together.

"Oh! what an ass I am! If Agnes sees red eyes, she will want to know all there is to know. I can imagine her expression if I were to explain I had been crying about Ned!—that blackguard Ned!" She laughed in an impatient, stifled way. "We must go somewhere to-night," she said a moment later; "I shall die boxed up at home. Why shouldn't we dine somewhere and then go on to a music hall!"

As she got out of the cab she dropped the envelope Haverford had given her and, as she picked it up hurriedly, her train of thought was changed swiftly; a sudden sense of delicious independence thrilled her. The man whom she feared, and the man who had shown her such chivalrous generosity, and the man whom she had married and lost, passed from her thoughts. She felt as if she were in sunshine. The check was blank! She had not expected that; there were no limits to her intentions.

"I shall give Veronique something on account; that will stop the writ," she said, as she passed into the house. "And the children shall have new coats, dear souls; they have been looking so shabby lately. Then I shall get out my pearls and some of my rings and other things first thing to-morrow."

On the hall table there were some cards, a splendid basket of flowers, and a square, white-coated packet. Camilla loved to find white packages, and letters, and flowers waiting for her.

She shivered as she remembered the cold perfection of the hall she had just left.

Sir Samuel's card was attached to the basket and the box of bonbons, and he had left a note also. Camilla tore this open, with a nervous gesture, then gave a quick sigh of intense relief and ran upstairs quickly.

"Agnes," she called gaily, putting her head in at the door of the drawing-room, "Sammy wants us to dine with him and go on afterward to the play. We shall just have time to change. What a bother you have to go out to dress. Why not let me send for your things?"

Mrs. Brenton shook her head.

"Oh, no. I will trot round to my rooms. As a matter of fact, I was just going. Will you call for me, Camilla? The children are just asleep. They tried to keep awake till you came, but they were too tired."

Camilla threw off her furs and cloak in her room, and then stole upstairs softly till she reached the nursery. All was still. The two small bodies in the two small cots never stirred as she approached.

Mrs. Lancing bent over each child and lightly laid a hand, as in benediction, on each little head. Then she paused a moment before Betty's small altar. The child had arranged it carefully before going to bed; there were white flowers in the tiny brass vases, and the red light burning before the statue of the Virgin was the only light in the room.

Camilla shut her eyes. She never remembered any prayers; but Betty had just knelt there, and the child's prayers had hallowed the place; they seemed to carry the mother's soul with them—just a little way.

As the nurse came into the room, Mrs. Lancing turned and, with her finger on her lip, went noiselessly from the room.

She dressed for dinner in a mood of such mental exhilaration it seemed like happiness. The sense of security coming after a more than usually trying mental strain was marvelously stimulating. And all unpleasant thoughts were tranquilized, if not silenced.

Haverford's cheque was locked up in her dressing case. She had not settled yet what sum she would inscribe on it. Certainly a small sum would be useless. So she mused as she ordered her maid to bring her the flowers Sir Samuel had sent, and she chose a few to wear as a breast-knot.

"What is a thousand to him, or, for the matter of that, two?" she queried. "And even two will not go very far. Well, that is for to-morrow."

She pinned the flowers in her bodice and smiled at her reflection.

TO BE CONTINUED TO-MORROW.

SMART MUFFS.

Among the smart muffs for formal wear are those in sable, combined with tailless ermine. An example of the latter seen at an opera matinee combined the whole skins of the sable, including the heads and tails and tailless or pure white ermine. The latter formed a wide band in the center of the muff, which was a small one, and there were two whole sable skins with the heads and tails attached at each side. Frills of point lace were set in at each end of the muff.

THE PRESENT OCCUPATION.

Have you bought them yet?

That is, the things you wanted and didn't get.

The shops are full of disappointed ones on this errand intent.

Cheer up! Think how much less they cost now than if you had bought them before Christmas.

Besides, if you had bought them then, somebody would have been sure to give them to you.

AS TO PRECIOUS STONES.

Pearls are really only carbonate of lime, and vinegar or any acid will destroy their polished surface. Hot water will cause opals to crack oftentimes, and will always destroy their fire. The turquoise will turn dingy green if washed often with soap, which is its bitter enemy.

THE BERRIED THORN.

Oh, tasteful Christmas-card design!
Gay emblem of forgotten care,
Whose seasonable sprouts entwine
St. Nicholas his hoary hair,
And blow the robin out with pulpy fare.

Bright holly! how you bring to mind
The raven locks, the rippling tones
Of one for whom I vainly pined.
And wooed for weeks with smothered groans—
Fair Choice (now, I fancy, Mrs. Jones).

And, ah! when I remember how
I lost her through your lurid shoots,
Offensively hilarious bough!
I long to grind beneath my boots
Those everlasting twigs and gaudy fruits.

'Twas just a year ago to-day;
The house was full of wassail-chant,
And (badly in the servants' way)
A sentimental-minded aunt
Had set in every coign some awkward plant.

And I resolved at last to act,
And win or lose her on the spot,
Escorted with consummate tact
My princess to a twilit grot,
And took a seat, I never dreamt on what.

I meant to murmur, "Chloe, dove!"
But Fortune's thread is O, how thin!
The rosy couch enhances love,
But who could amorous court begin
When sitting down on spikes that hurt like sin?

And thus I hate you, holly sprigs:
Your festal air is all a sham,
Reminding me, in lonely digs,
A moody bachelor as I am,
Of love's true course that ended in a dam.

—London Punch.

THE MINISTER'S WOOING.

(Written for The Washington Herald.)

One summer's day I went away upon a brief vacation;
I took along a book, a song, to furnish avocation.
I said (in mind) if fate is kind, I'll get me meditation;
But cruel fate (the idle prate) enmeshed me in flirtation.

Vacation o'er, I left the shore, returned to daily duty;
The good folks said, "Why, Mr. Shedd, you're cultivated beauty;
You left us sad, you come back glad; you seem to be elated,
And, too, your hair, though once quite rare, we find rejuvenated."

I said, "Well, well, the wedding bell shall chase away my sorrow;
I'd like to-day a raise in pay, 'twould shameful be to borrow."
They murmured not; the increase got, our wedding is to-morrow.

C. F. NEWTON.

1514 K street northwest, Washington, D. C.

With the Chef.

Three level tablespoons of butter, one level teaspoon finely minced shallot, one-half pound mushrooms chopped, salt, pepper, flour, cream, yolk of one egg, one level teaspoon finely minced parsley. Melt the butter; add the shallot and cook for five minutes without browning. Add the mushrooms and cook five minutes longer; then season with salt and pepper and dredge with flour. Moisten with cream, and when hot add the egg-yolk slightly beaten and the parsley. Remove from the fire and when cool spread on circular pieces of toasted bread. Cover with buttered crumbs and brown in a hot oven.

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Cut thin slices of white bread and spread half of them with soft butter, and the remaining half with finely-chopped ham. Press the slices together and remove the crust. Beat one egg slightly, add one-half cup milk and strain over the sandwiches. When moistened place them in a hot frying pan containing two level tablespoons of butter. Brown nicely on both sides and serve at once.

A Feminine Failing.

Burn your bridges behind you.

Women seldom have the courage for this.

It takes the stern sex to resolve never to go back.

Femininity likes to cross and re-cross its old bridges.

Even with tears and wringing of hands they trot over them.

The only wise thing is to apply the match, and destroy them once for all.

So burn your bridges, and march straight forward into the new year, without a backward look.

A Belt for Baby.

Now the baby's toys can't get away.

There's a new contrivance which should amuse him by the hour.

It's a satin belt to which five toys are tied by ribbons.

There's a rubber ring, and rattle, a ball, a doll, and a celluloid horn.

There's nothing to break and no paint to rub off, and the toys are pretty.

Put this belt on Master Baby, and he can reach out and get whichever toy he likes, whenever he likes, for he can't drop nor lose them.

It's a clever invention, and the baby's joy in it only proves how stupid grown-ups were not to have thought of it sooner.

WOMANLY WOMEN.

In Germany a woman is judged, not according to her drawing-room accomplishments or knowledge of men and matters of the time, but according to her domesticity. That is exactly how the kaiserin likes to be judged. She prides herself on being a model housewife, and has always endeavored to set an example to her countrywomen by keeping studiously aloof from matters political and concentrating her attention upon the requirements of her home, husband, and children. Outside these, the serious interests of the empress lie mainly among the poor and suffering. She is intensely charitable and has done wonders to help forward philanthropic movements in Germany, and it is in consequence of her work in this direction that she has been termed "Empress of Goodness." At the same time her majesty is fond of outdoor recreations, being quite an expert tennis player, and one of the best horsewomen in the empire.

A HEALTH REGIME.

Eat fruit for breakfast.
Eat fruit for luncheon.
Avoid pastry.
Shun muffins and crumpets and buttered toast.
Eat whole-meal bread.
Decline potatoes if they are served more than once a day.
Do not drink tea or coffee.
Walk four miles every day.
Take a bath every day.
Wash the face every night in warm water.
Sleep eight hours a night.

FROM WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

Even those of us who are in no sense devotees of the Christian Science idea often have very good reason to be convinced that there is a deal of common sense in the belief that many of our ills will yield quite as readily to a little cheerfulness or a bit of good luck as to drugs.

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The "bread pills" with which some wise physicians are said to dose their patients that are merely in need of the attention of some one who will sympathize with them in a supposed ailment are not so much of a joke as they may seem to some to be. It appears that the bread-pill theory is not too antiquated for use on occasion, even by such an advanced school of medicine as that of those who call the science of manipulating the cords, muscles, and veins osteopathy.

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For a certain osteopathic practitioner in a Western city tells a story of himself to a few privileged friends that proves that the bread pill era has not departed. It seems that he was visited one day by a woman who was clearly a hypochondriac. The special disease with which she believed herself afflicted was heart trouble, let us say, for if the correct disease were cited the story might get round to the woman concerned and mean trouble for her and posibly for the osteopath.

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Whatever the disease, it was not present, as the stethoscope proved, nor was there sign of other trouble. But the practitioner did not say that. Had he done so his patient would have gone away to bewail his ignorance, perhaps publicly. The doctor went to work and in the course of his treatment skillfully induced a slight inflammation in the muscles of the knee.

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The treatment completed, he assured the patient that her heart trouble was a secondary symptom merely. "The main trouble is in your left knee," he added. The patient declared that there was none, but with her first step she felt the irritation and was convinced. Three more treatments, the knee was cured and so was the fancied heart trouble. It strikes me that this osteopathic bread pill did a real service, and that, I suppose, is what doctors are supposed to furnish.

HUMANITY CONCEITED.

Although I am not prepared to go quite to the extreme of the French philosopher, who declared that the more he saw of men the better he liked dogs, I sometimes wonder if we really give dumb animals all the credit they are entitled to.

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Humanity is inclined to be somewhat conceited and to reserve to itself as "the master of creation" a monopoly of all of what it is pleased to term the "higher powers." I have seen profound treatises as to whether or not animals have souls, a deep question which I should not fancy discussing. That they have brains is, of course, a physiological fact demonstrated by many a post-mortem, as well as, I fear, by altogether too frequent vivisections.

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But as to how much those brains amount to there is not such general agreement. As the owner of a dog that has been one of the family for five years, I find myself enrolled among those who believe that a dog's brains do something more for him than to fill a vacuum in his cranium. If my dog—and my neighbors' dogs as well—do not reason with their brains, then I do not know just what reasoning is.

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My dog is naughty sometimes. Like man he likes to do things he is not supposed to do. Despite his love for his home, he is fond of roaming and sometimes stays away longer than he knows he should. I know he knows this, for when he comes home he looks as if he did, and looks as he never looks except when he has done what he should not. For purposes of differentiation we may call this instinct, if we choose, but there is a reasoning power behind it.

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All of which inclines me to the belief that we should treat dumb animals about as we would like to have them treat us if they had the power to abuse us. After all, they may know more than even those who esteem them the most imagine they do.

BETTY BRADEEN.

A SET OF FANCY APRONS.

A pretty apron is so useful an accessory to the feminine toilette that few women now care to dispense with it. At the tea table, in the sewing-room, or while busy about the hundred-and-one little duties that fall to the daily lot of every housewifely woman, an apron is not only convenient, but adds to the daintiness and womanliness of the appearance. The pretty set of aprons sketched illustrates some of the newest and best ideas in the way of such accessories. The round, square, and triple-pointed aprons may be made with or without bibs, as preferred, and the pockets may in all cases be omitted if desired. Dotted Swiss, plain or embroidered batiste, nainsook, or lawn are suitable for making the aprons, while lace, embroidery, or fancy stitchery may be used to decorate. To make either apron requires 1 3-4 yards of material, 36 inches wide. One size.

A pattern of this may be obtained by inclosing 10 cents in stamps and addressing Pattern Department, The Washington Herald, 734 Fifteenth street northwest, giving the number (2748) and size wanted.

WOMEN AND THEIR CHAT

The most sympathetic girl in the world looked tired. Four people had been to see her that morning. Each of them had poured some trouble into her ears. Every one does so. If they didn't know before that they had a trouble, they think of one as soon as they see her. She is so sympathetic that she just simply invites such confidences, without guessing her own guilt in the matter.

To every tale of woe she listened as if it were the one sorrow in the world of paramount interest. She did not let her eyes wander to the clock, nor her fingers fidget with the piles of work lying waiting on her desk. She did not once look vacantly off into space, nor let fall a random remark. I know her! I know with just what whole-hearted, intense interest she listened to every word, what sensible comments she made, how helpful was the advice she offered, and how cheered the troublous one went away from her.

Then I know how she sighed, and turned a little lifelessly to her work, and how it took her some time to get up the proper animation to do it well. For one cannot throw one's self completely into other people's woes and pour out a perpetual stream of commiseration without having one's own energies sapped to some degree.

People impose on the most sympathetic girl in the world. They never dream how selfish they are.

But I think I detect the faint beginnings of a turning of the worm.

"So-and-so was in to see me just before you came," she said, wearily. "I'm afraid I didn't give her much help. She told me a lot about her trouble over at G——'s. But I was so utterly worn out that I couldn't think of a thing to say to her. It's too bad, for I know she came to me for sympathy."

"Don't let that worry you," I told her, seeing her real distress. "If a few people could just get a small icicle from you once in awhile it would cure them of coming up here to dribble imaginary troubles into your ears."

"That is not kind of you," she said. "I like to help people."

"And you do," I answered, "when the trouble is real, and there is some actual thing to be done. But haven't you noticed that they mean on and on, just for the sake of hearing themselves talk and finding somebody to listen to them? It's bad for them. And it's most unfair to yourself."

And a little later, when I casually mentioned my headache, and made a tentative little moan about some vexation of my own, the sympathetic girl was so far from encouraging me as to look coldly out of the window and observe, pleasantly, that it looked like snow.

Which hurt my feelings, of course. But I will even have my feelings hurt, if the worm, for her own sake, will turn.

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One young woman is puzzling over the problem of how she could possibly have escaped receiving a single pocket-handkerchief, in view of all that were purchased in this city before Christmas. She says she herself witnessed sufficient of these useful articles bought to stretch all the way around the earth and reach a respectable distance toward the moon. What became of them all, she does not know, but not one came her way, in spite of her urgent need, and she was overheard pathetically petitioning a friend to inform her of the first mussed mouchoir sale heard of, in order that she might supply this lamentable oversight on the part of her friends.

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Apparently gloves are one of the things nobody takes any trouble to find out what size anybody wears. Judging by the crowds lined up at exchange counters for these commodities at 8:30 o'clock the morning after Christmas, gloves are purchased on the airy principle that anybody with four fingers and a thumb to each hand can wear any article answering these requirements. Everybody in town seemed to have been presented with misfit hand coverings, and it occurred to one woman who twirled impatiently on her toes while 150 people ahead of her explained how their gloves came to be bought, and who bought them, and who they were bought for, and what was the matter with them—it occurred to her that it would be an excellent idea if just before Christmas everybody should issue to his and her friends a circular setting forth the exact dimensions of their hands, with any particularities relating thereto, such as extra length or shortness of fingers, &c. Think of the time and trouble it would save!

Numbers of the waiting victims before the altar of the exchange desk goddess were, of course, women laden with the digit coverings of their masculine relatives. For it is a martyrdom the bravest man shirks and which no man under heaven can be induced to undergo if he can find some woman devoted enough to undergo it for him.

One large, brawny man was there, indeed, who slapped down a ponderous pair of sleighing gloves, observing that they were a present from his wife, and that they were too clumsy, and he didn't want them anyway, and proposes to buy himself some other present. And one wondered if his wife were sick abed, or if she had died in the meantime, or if he didn't want to hurt her feelings and therefore was exchanging them on the sly, or just how it did happen that he got into the exchange counter melee himself instead of marching back the frail little wisp of a woman that kind of a man is always married to.

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Of course, there were some surprises. For instance, there was a man who did not want an umbrella, and a woman who did. The other night this man beheld this woman smuggling a huge umbrella box upstairs, and at the same moment the woman observed the man slipping a smaller umbrella box of feminine dimensions into his wardrobe. A look of pleased anticipation flitted over her countenance, but a shadow fell across his.

"It's one of your presents," gaily called the woman, shaking her box over the banister.

"Jove!" groaned the man. "I've got three umbrellas already. I gave her credit for more imagination."

"I do hope it's a dark blue one," smiled the young woman, as she went upstairs, "I loathe black umbrellas."

Wednesday morning the man put out a reluctant hand to accept his fourth rain-defier.

"So awfully kind of you," he murmured. "Great Scott! Heaviest umbrella ever I handled."

Then the man opened the umbrella box and beheld in various tissue wrappings the shining solid glass towel racks and other accoutrements he had wanted for his new own particular bathroom. And he was so pleased that he almost forgot to hand the woman a wee little box which he took from his vest pocket.

"An umbrella" said he. "Why, of course not. Oh, that one you saw in my wardrobe is a present Rob asked me to fetch up for mother. But, say, don't you like that?"

And she did, and said so, as she pinned the glittering gift to her collar, humming. "There's many a slip," and then made a mental note: "Mem.—Buy myself a dark-blue umbrella."

A Fox Hunt.

From the Boston Transcript.

While walking in the Arboretum last Friday afternoon, a friend and myself witnessed a rather unusual incident, I believe.

We were near the top of Hemlock Hill, and stopped for a moment to watch a flock of crows that seemed to be in distress, flying into and circling about a clump of trees upon our right.

The cause of their distress suddenly appeared from out of the trees, namely, a fox. Mr. Fox stood for quite a few moments in the open, apparently trying to decide which direction he should take to rid himself of his tormentors, for such the crows appeared to be, flying very low, near the fox, and continuing their racket.

He finally decided to go down the opposite side of the hill, and started off at a rapid pace, with the entire flock of crows in hot pursuit.

We wondered just how long the crows would continue the "hunt," and what would be the end of Mr. Fox.